

Testimony of

Renita Casey

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Before the

Education Committee

March 15, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee.

I testify today in support of House Bill 6884. This bill takes important steps toward addressing the educator shortage in Connecticut, showing educators that theirs is a respected profession, and ensuring that our classrooms and schools can provide the best possible education for our students.

I am proud to say that I have been teaching for 25 years to include working through the past several years of the Pandemic and helping support students and families through getting to a new normal. All the while doing what needed to be done for my family, friends, and community. The COVID Benefit Enhancement package is a way to acknowledge that teachers were essential workers who went above and beyond during the pandemic but still work hard every day in the changing times that are a result of this trying time for our state. Dedicated duty free prep time of even 30 minutes a day would give teachers time during the day when they are at their best to do some of the prep that they do after school and for many of us into the evening at home in order to provide the modified and specialized instruction we know our students need to succeed. I support all aspects of HB 6884 – An Act Concerning the Recruitment, Retention, and Enhancement of the Teaching Profession. This includes setting a minimum teacher salary as a way to show future educators that they are respected for the important work. Making education a profession that is well respected economically will attract the best of the best to Connecticut. Thus, helping with teacher shortage by growing our own but also attracting people to Connecticut. The teacher tax credit suggested amount of \$500 dollars is a start to showing educators that you understand just how much of our own money we put into our classrooms. EdTPA which was good in theory is not the best way to support new educators and should be eliminated. I have been an official and unofficial mentor and it is not beneficial to the new teachers. Raising the Kindergarten Start Age will give our children the gift of time. Play-based learning is important at the earliest grades. Your support of an

Educator Bill of Rights would show teachers you respect them as professionals for the many roles they willingly take on, hard work, professionalism, and knowledge that comes with living the life of service that I and others proudly decide to do as a profession.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

